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## **INTERNATIONAL REPUBLICAN INSTITUTE (IRI)**

**Background:** Despite being under-represented within the government, women occupy significant space within Haiti's active civil society. Women's advocacy organizations are prevalent in the capital and in the provinces. Even communities with relatively insignificant populations frequently boast multiple women-focused organizations and associations. Although these organizations are numerous, they are only marginally effective in promoting women's participation in, and knowledge of, the political process itself. This political disengagement does not result from a lack of interest, but in large part from a lack of training, organization and support for women within the political party structure itself.

**Activities:** In an effort to link the efforts of Haiti's active female civil society advocates to the election of female political representatives, IRI has pursued a set of activities designed to *increase women's engagement in the political process as informed citizens, committed voters, qualified candidates, and effective legislators*. IRI has conducted complementary activities at the national and regional levels. IRI works, across the political spectrum, with individuals and associations that it has identified as capable and committed leaders.

For the Cayes region, IRI has assisted women's associations by:

- Sensitizing and encouraging women to vote during the entire electoral cycle
- Promoting the vote in favor of women candidates.
- Highlighting the women candidates at all levels of government.
- Holding seminars pertaining to the role of the elected officials at each level of government.
- Conducting training sessions on the positive aspects of becoming actively engaged in a political party.
- Showing women how they can be promoters of change within their communities.

**USAID Support** Over the past six years, USAID has funded the programs of IRI in Haiti with a total of \$4,552,000.00